

COVAX and continues to promote its own vaccine, which is either ineffective or unavailable because people in Cuba are dying. As a result, everyday Cubans continue to suffer.

The United States must lead a serious effort to push for the demilitarization of the Cuban economy. The military-owned umbrella company GAESA reigns supreme over the Cuban economy. It is run by whom? By Raul Castro's son-in-law, Luis Alberto Lopez-Callejas, fueling the rise of a new generation of regime oligarchs. The Cuban people will never achieve economic prosperity while regime military companies control the economy.

After years of efforts by the Trump administration to slash funding for programs that we continuously had to fight to bring back that provide lifelines to Cuban activists and civil society, I am very pleased to see that the Biden administration has requested \$20 million for these programs and made clear that America will continue standing with those on the frontlines of Cuba's pro-democracy movement.

It is time also for the United States to launch a campaign in support of labor rights inside of Cuba. There is no acceptable explanation for why Cuban men and women are unable to be directly hired and directly paid by international companies and organizations that are present in Cuba. If we are serious about empowering the Cuban people, they must have a direct say in their livelihoods.

The Biden administration should pursue the success of past campaigns, such as the Sullivan Principles in South Africa, to lead efforts that require businesses to engage directly with the Cuban people and their employment.

The Biden administration should also maintain the State Department's Cuba Restricted List, which can help businesses and organizations directly engage with the Cuban people instead of regime conglomerates.

Additionally, the United States and our allies must send a message to members of the Cuban military. The Cuban military's slogan is that it draws its power from the people. Well, the people are protesting. In reality, you should not use your power against the people.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

The Cuban Army has to understand that if their mandate comes from the people, the people is protesting; the people wants freedom. Don't use your arms against your brothers and sisters if you want to have a future in Cuba.

Additionally, let's be clear. When we send that message to the Cuban military not to turn its arms against its brothers and sisters, the world is watching what is happening in Cuba. There is a future in a democratic Cuba under civilian control for members of the military who refuse to repress their fellow citizens, but if you are involved in human rights abuses and have blood on your hands, you will be held accountable.

It is also worth noting to Cuba's military leaders that their future with this regime is anything but certain. In the last 10 days—in the last 10 days—five Cuban generals have died under highly suspicious conditions that the regime seems intent on covering up. All of a sudden, five Cuban generals, in 10 days, have died. I don't know at this time that I would want to be a general in Cuba.

To those who want to blame Cuba's misery on the U.S. embargo, I would say that it is the Cuban regime that needs to lift its embargo on its own population. It is the regime's own restrictive policies that have left the average Cuban destitute while oligarchs enjoy state-run stores that are brimming with dollar-denominated goods out of reach to the general population.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

The real embargo is the one the communist regime has imposed against its own people who are not able to access food, medicine or basic needs without its consent.

The steps to end the embargo are laid out clearly in title II of the LIBERTAD Act, which is the law of the United States, which I wrote. Those steps include releasing political prisoners, legalizing political activity, and holding democratic elections.

If the regime ends its iron-fisted rule over the Cuban people, title II of the LIBERTAD Act lays out what the United States stands ready to do to pursue a different relationship with the people of Cuba. The United States would work directly with a democratic government to take steps to remove the embargo, to engage in direct trade with Cuba, to support its return and membership to international financial organizations, and so much more. It is all there in U.S. law. This is not a promise of something that could happen; it is a promise of what would happen if there is a change in Cuba.

It is time for the Cuban regime to take the steps and accept the demands of the Cuban people.

Let me close on a personal note.

I stand here on the floor of the U.S. Senate as the son of Cuban refugees who came to this country in search of freedom and opportunity.

Today, we are bearing witness to something in Cuba that my parents never got to see.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

The day they dreamt about is the day millions of Cubans around the world dream today, the day Cuba is set free.

We are bearing witness to a historic moment in which Cubans from all walks of life are coming together to demand that same freedom. We are bearing witness to a deep discontent within the Cuban people with the status quo and life under one of the most repressive regimes ever known.

For more than 60 years, they have lived without liberty and justice, without freedom of expression, without human rights and the ability to determine their own future.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Don't be fooled. When the people went out to protest, they are not asking for food, vaccines, or work. No.

One word, and only one. Freedom, freedom, freedom.

Freedom, because with freedom, everything else comes.

Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past. Let us not fall victim to tired myths. Let us embrace the facts over the fiction. Most importantly, let us hear the Cuban people's cries for freedom.

It is our job to stand with them, to empower them, to ensure that the international community helps them achieve their dreams and aspirations.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Because without freedom and democracy, there is no "Patria y Vida." But with freedom and democracy, there is a homeland of life and many opportunities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Wyoming.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to oppose Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending spree.

If Democrats pass the bill, every American will end up paying more, and clearly pay more in taxes, also pay more for the costs that people are seeing today at home—goods, gas, groceries. These prices all continue to go up.

First, let's talk about taxes. This bill would be the largest tax increase in the history of the United States—actually, in the last half century.

The bill raises taxes on small businesses, and that means higher prices on everyone and also fewer jobs.

The bill raises taxes on farmers and ranchers, who will have a harder time in terms of passing down the family farm or ranch to their kids or grandkids.

The bill raises taxes on savings and investments. So seniors will either have to work longer or retire with less.

It includes trillions of dollars in tax increases, yet Democrats seem to be pandering to their elite donors. They made sure to include special exemptions for rich people in blue States and for the owners of electric vehicles.

Now a study from the University of California Berkeley—clearly not a conservative university—they say that 9 out of 10 electric vehicle subsidies go to the rich—go to the rich. Nine out of ten, according to Berkeley, go to the rich.

Democrats also would give tax breaks for people making up to \$400,000 a year for all sorts of things, including sending their kids to summer camp.

Is that what the Democrats want to vote for: Tax breaks for people making up to \$400,000 a year to send their kids to summer camp?

Well, the contrast with Republicans could not be clearer. Where Democrats

are making more handouts for their friends, Republicans actually simplified the Tax Code. Where Democrats' increases are going to eliminate jobs, our tax cuts increased job growth, increased employment, lowered unemployment, raised wages.

The 2017 tax cut was an across-the-board tax cut. It helped businesses and working families, and the result was the best economy in my lifetime.

In the months after the tax cuts, nearly 200 companies—200 companies—announced raises for their employees.

Six million American workers received either a bonus or a raise or an increased retirement contribution—6 million Americans after we passed that law.

Now, before the pandemic, unemployment was at a 50-year low. Wages were growing at the fastest pace in a decade, and the biggest wage gains were for people at the bottom of the economic ladder.

On average, American household income rose by more than \$4,000 a year. Well, this is more than the increase over the entire 8 years of the Obama-Biden administration.

We had the lowest poverty rate in a half a century. Child poverty was down; income inequality went down. The top 1 percent's share of taxes went up, so the richer folks were actually paying more in taxes.

After Republicans cut taxes, we saw the lowest unemployment rates ever recorded for African Americans, for Hispanic Americans, and for Asian Americans.

When we began to reopen the economy last year, it was the fastest recovery in American history. That was because we had such a strong economy before the pandemic.

What a contrast to what we have with the Democrats over the last 6 months. Since Democrats took control of Washington, we have seen the fastest rise in core inflation in 40 years—the fastest rise in core inflation in 40 years.

And we have also seen the most unfilled jobs in Americans history. The American people are already paying more at the grocery store, paying more at the gas station; now the American people are bracing for the fact that they are going to pay a lot more on tax day as well.

Yet just as bad as the Democrats' tax increases, on top of that, we see reckless spending. Democrats tell us the bill costs \$3.5 trillion. This is nearly the cost of what America spent in World War II. Yet the bill is actually much more expensive than \$3.5 trillion, because Democrats continue to use accounting gimmicks to hide the real cost of the legislation.

Last week, a nonpartisan group released a study showing the real cost is likely \$5.5 trillion. This is on top of the \$6 trillion we have already spent on coronavirus relief. Five and a half trillion dollars is larger than the entire economy of Japan, which is the third largest economy in the world.

This is clearly a recipe for inflation. So now Democrats are waving around a report from a single discredited economist who says: Oh, don't worry about inflation.

Well, the people in my home State of Wyoming are worried about inflation because they are living it.

Now, this same economist has been wrong over and over and over again in his career. He predicted a recession under President Trump. Instead, we saw the best economy of our lifetime. He wasn't even close. His work was an influence on President Obama's stimulus plan, which gave us the slowest recovery in 70 years.

So hard to know why the Democrats would want to even turn to this person other than he is saying what they want him to say.

Who are you going to believe? Him or your own two eyes?

And the people of Wyoming believe their own two eyes when they go and fill up with gas or they go to the grocery store or other stores and see their paycheck being eaten away.

Now, Democrats now tell us they can spend their way out of inflation. Spend their way out of inflation?

This isn't just wishful thinking. This is radical. It is extreme. It is dangerous. It is scary. Our economy doesn't need a dime of stimulus. We don't even need stimulus. We didn't need it 4 months ago, when Democrats borrowed and spent an additional \$2 trillion.

Prices are going up because Democrats spent too much already. The money supply hasn't gone up this fast since World War II.

One Democrat Senator, this weekend, said inflation is happening because of money we have already spent.

Well, if this is true, then why would we want to add fuel to the fire and spend more? Why would we want to do that?

Democrats are printing more money without creating more goods and services. So if you print more money without creating more goods and services, this is almost a textbook definition of inflation.

The two bills coming to the floor now would bring Democrats' total for the year to \$8 trillion in additional government spending.

According to an estimate from the Manhattan Institute, this is enough to give every American household \$60,000; or it is enough to cut income taxes by one-third.

Instead, Democrats are preparing more payoffs for their friends and donors. This bill is a full giveaway to union bosses, trial lawyers, leftwing professors. It includes taxpayer funding for full-time professional climate activists. It includes corporate welfare for connected companies.

This tax-and-spending spree is utterly reckless. Not one Republican will vote for this bill. This means all it takes is one Democrat in the Senate or a handful in the House to stop this

freight train to socialism. All it takes is one Democrat concerned about our future, willing to say: We shouldn't weigh down our children with debt or our economy with massive tax increases.

President Biden and the Democrat party are in charge of this runaway train. Each and every Democrat is going to be held responsible for the consequences. This includes more inflation, more worker shortages, more debt, and more dependency.

Look, Democrats did enough damage with their last spending spree. This new spending spree is much worse.

Unlike their last spending spree, this bill includes massive tax increases. It is one more reason why the American people are already speaking out against this reckless tax-and-spending spree.

People across the country and certainly home in Wyoming are fed up, and the poll numbers are showing it. Seventy-four percent of Americans—we are talking Republicans, Democrats, Independents—74 percent of Americans are concerned this spending spree will accelerate inflation; 78 percent are rightly concerned about their own wages going up at a time when—with their own taxes going up at a time when their wages have been getting eaten into by inflation.

The people are going to remember how you vote on this bill. They are going to remember it. They remember it every time they go to the gas station, every time they go to the grocery store, and they are clearly going to remember it when they go to vote.

So election day will come, people will make their votes as citizens, and they will realize what the Democrats have done with this reckless tax-and-spending spree and how it has impacted them as they are paying more in taxes, having a greater national debt, and inflation eating away at their paycheck.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

(The remarks of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO pertaining to the introduction of S. 2513 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON PROUTY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all remaining time be yielded back on the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Prouty nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.